

analysis

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For each, freedom to produce; to the producer, his product.—ROYAL E. S. HAYES.

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Commies Don't Count

THE Chamber of Commerce of the United States is as fretful as a rooster whose harem is being eyed by a rival. Its agitation is recorded in a report, "approved unanimously by the Board of Directors," on *Communist Infiltration in the United States*, with the sub-title, in red ink, "Its Nature and How to Combat It." The thing is well-done and is worth the quarter asked for it; that is, if you are not familiar with what is going on along those lines.

When you read this pamphlet you get the idea that these communists are a pretty bad lot, unscrupulous, ruthless, lying and altogether Machiavellian. No doubt they are. I would not know; the few communists I have come into contact with have irritated me with their stupid vulgarity and I therefore try to avoid them. They do not concern me. Why does the Chamber of Commerce of the United States interest itself in them? The pamphlet suggests purely patriotic motivation. It warns the reader that what the communists hope to impose on him violates the institutions collectively called Americanism. One wishes the Chamber had supplemented its report with a detailed description of the Americanism it is anxious to preserve. Lacking such a description we must supply one from our knowledge of the inclinations of all chambers of commerce which flourish or have flourished in these United States.

What the Commies Want

PUTTING that aside for the moment, let us consider what these communist fellows want. Their ultimate aim, about which they are unequivocal, regardless of the methods by which they hope to attain it, is to establish a committee of men who by virtue of their control of the political machinery of the country would order the private and public affairs of all citizens. They claim that such a committee would bring to us that full measure of happiness for which men have always yearned. That the claim is subject to doubt is unimportant; the goal of centralization of power is what we are concerned with. The Chamber of Commerce says that this in itself is very bad.

Considering the nature of political power we must agree with the Chamber. Political power has always been the instrument by which those who control it have feathered their nests at the expense of those upon whom that power is imposed. In economic terminology this process of getting something for nothing is called exploitation. The seed of exploitation is the human inclination to satisfy desires without expending labor, and we must conclude that all humans, you and I, are exploiters at heart. The crude, uncertain and dangerous method of exploitation is taking by force; the sophisticated method

is taking by means of a recognized privilege. The privilege-way is better because it achieves regularity through common adulation of the law, on which the privilege is based, and has the further advantage of being supported by the physical force at the command of the political power which created it. Thus, the veterans could overpower the artisans and merchants of the community and take the goods they want; or, they can apply to the Congress, using their votes as a bribe, for a regularized grant of goods.

The communists claim that their kind of committee will not use political power in this historic way. It is a claim which we must, on the basis of all the evidence, dismiss out of hand; it is predicated on the assumption that the communist is *sui generis*, different in kind from all other men. That partakes something of the miraculous, and until the miracle is seen we shall have to assume that the communistic political committee will operate as all political committeemen have always operated; they will take care of themselves and their friends. The only difference between it and the others is in that its exercise of power will be without limit, and that means that the committee will dispose of the entire national output as they see fit. All privilege will be centered in those who control political power. In that respect it will be different from the American procedure, wherein various pressure groups share in the munificence of political power. It will be monolithic rather than pluralistic exploitation.

In either system those who produce the goods and services by which they hope to

live are defrauded; assuming, of course, that the producer has a right to enjoy the products of his labors. The difference between the two seems to lie in the extent and incidence of fraud. That's all.

The unhorsing of privilege can be effected only by a revolt against political power *per se*, and for that enterprise the people who make up chambers of commerce show no passion. They engage in no movement for the abolition of taxes, without which the State would fold up, and one is justified in assuming that they do not wish this to happen; the State has proven itself a valuable ally. They make no demand for the abolition of all subventions, but, rather, are feverishly lobbying Congress and the local politicians for every conceivable tax-aid their cupidity can invent. The purpose and practice of every organization of business men—industrialists, bankers, farmers, and now laborers—has been to secure from political power some economic advantage for its members. Hence, the current fretfulness about the communists must be laid to the fear of competition in the control of political power.

Communism via Americanism

THE essence of communism is the concentration of political power. That will come about, is coming about, in the historic American way; that is, by the outright sale to political power of big chunks of social power in return for privilege. It is a matter of trade pure and simple. This bargaining between privilege and power is so characteristic of our public affairs that it must be accounted an essential of Americanism. The very

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